

The Rubbish RESOURCE



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ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A FIRE?



On the evening of April 27, 2000, the Littleton Transfer Station burned to the ground. The cause of the fire was undetermined. To most of you, operating a solid waste facility, this is old news.

However, what we learn from the aftermath of this unfortunate event is important. It's important because there is a cost to taxpayers to rebuild, a length of time before construction is completed, and an inconvenience to residents and employees who use a temporary facility.

Sometimes the simplest things are the ones overlooked. For example, is the insurance policy on your facility and equipment up to date and in the amount needed to purchase a replacement? Many times new or used equipment is purchased or an addition is added to the facility without being added to the insurance policy. The insurance policy should be updated annually to be sure it is in the amount necessary to cover the replacement costs of facility and equipment should a catastrophe occur. In addition, be aware of any exceptions or special requirements in your policy.

Vehicles and equipment located outside should be kept at least 25 feet from the building. It's tempting to leave vehicles and equipment next to the building for ease of use, but if a fire occurs, the vehicles and equipment could be damaged or a total loss. Another suggestion is that all propane tanks should also be located at least 25 feet from the building. Tanks set too close to the building may increase the risk of fumes leaking into the building, causing an explosion as a result of a fire.

If used oil is collected in 55-gallon drums at the facility, the drums should be kept in a separate containment building. Drums containing used oil for use as fuel in a furnace should be brought into the building as needed and placed onto, or into, a containment area. This would reduce the amount of oil kept in the building and would help to contain the used oil in case of a leak or explosion caused by a fire.

One of the easiest things you can do to save yourself a lot of grief is to keep a duplicate of all important and irreplaceable documents in another location. These documents include: important phone numbers, recycling reports, budgets, computer disks, and other pertinent information not readily available elsewhere. Also be aware that fireproof safes don't work in a really hot fire.

Last and certainly not least is to have a "game plan" or "contingency plan" in place before a fire occurs. This allows you to quickly set up and operate a temporary transfer station until a new facility is constructed. The plan should include: the phone numbers of haulers, disposal facilities, recycling markets; sources for replacement rollofs and other containers; site plan showing traffic flow and location of rollofs and other containers; procedures and methods for collection, storage, and processing of incoming waste; and finally, signs and other methods used to educate residents to use the new temporary facility. Good working relationships with your haulers, recycling markets, solid waste organizations, other towns and operators, and area businesses can be key to the successful implementation of a contingency plan..

Beating the Drum for Best Management Practices

In New Hampshire, many municipal transfer stations/recycling centers (TS/RC) accept 55-gallon drums for scrap metal recycling and for reuse. Since these drums may have contained hazardous materials that could be harmful to people and to the environment, it is important that operators of TS/RC who accept drums be informed about the best management practices for collection and storage.

To assist operators, the Department of Environmental Services has developed a fact sheet titled, *Best Management Practices for 55-Gallon Drums*, which outlines the best management practices for collecting, reusing, and recycling 55-drums. The fact sheet, number WMD-SW-29, may be obtained at the DES Public Information and Permitting Office at (603) 271-2975, or at the DES website at www.des.state.nh.us.

NEW RECYCLING COORDINATOR



We're back in business! Marc Morgan is the new DES State Recycling Coordinator. We thought we would have a chat with Marc about future projects.

RR: Marc, what experiences do you bring to the position of State Recycling Coordinator?

MM: Many of your readers will know me as the former State Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator. Along with my bachelor's degree in Environmental Policy, I've also managed and operated a transfer station, and assisted in the Keene State College recycling program. Recently, I've done some work with the City of Manchester recycling programs.

RR: What do you see as the recycling priorities of the state?

I see the 40% recycling rate as very achievable. New Hampshire communities have a great infrastructure to handle many recycling needs, and a well-trained group of operators. Now, we just have to strategically identify waste streams that could get us closer to our goal.

RR: Sounds good. What waste streams do you see as playing a role?

I have experience with composting and I see limitless possibilities with our leaf, yard, and food waste. We need to identify where the composting is occurring in the state and offer technical assistance to those communities that aren't composting. I would also like to address some of the difficulties of composting certain items, such as sheetrock and seaweed.

Another concern of mine is paper recovery (all grades). As one of the largest portions of the waste stream, greater recovery could really help New Hampshire increase its recycling rate. There also needs to be greater recovery in our larger communities, such as Concord. I can't imagine that recycling activities in general won't become increasingly attractive to towns and markets during these times of high disposal prices.

RR: What other things are on the top of your list?

MM: Certainly, education. In my opinion, residents either do not see recycling as convenient or may not be aware that it is even an option in their community. There are lots of great ways that the communities can get the word out, such as newsletters, newspaper articles, and even television. America Recycles Day is another great way to reach residents and introduce them to the local recycling program.

RR: What kind of promotion for recycling will you use?

I plan on working with communities to address recycling issues. One of the activities that I will use to accomplish this will be America Recycles Day. The planning for next year's events will begin in January. American Recycles Day is a great way to let citizens know just what it takes to manage all of our wastes and what they can do to further recycling in their community. I'll be searching for a group of dedicated individuals who want to make this part of their community. Readers who are interested can give me a call at 271-3712, but anyone should feel free to call me on all recycling issues.

DES Solid Waste Conference 2000

DES held their annual solid waste conference, *"Charting a New Course for Better Waste Management,"* on September 20th at Yoken's Conference Center, Portsmouth. The all-day conference was attended by more than 200 people, and included a diverse vendor area of over 20 displays. The day began with opening remarks by DES Commissioner Robert Varney, outlining some of the state's current environmental initiatives such as the "DES Dioxin Reduction Strategy." Dr. Philip O'Brien, Director of the Waste Management Division, gave a progress report on the Governor's Solid Waste Task Force, and some Task Force members were on-hand to take questions from the audience. The participants also enjoyed sessions on *"The Expanding Role of the Operator," "Landfill Mining,"* and *"The History of Trash,"* among others. Thanks to all who attended for helping to make it a successful day!

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